UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION

Engaging Youth in Agriculture Career Exploration: 4-H Science of Agriculture Challenge

Abstract

The Minnesota 4-H Science of Agriculture Challenge is a new youth development program that focuses on engaging youth in hands-on agriculture exploration while increasing agricultural literacy, enhancing STEM skills, and educating youth about career opportunities that exist within agricultural sciences. 4-H members identify an agricultural issue within their community and work with a business and industry mentor to apply STEM concepts to develop a potential solution. Teams share their research and results in their communities and at the state contest.

2015 Dakota County Science of Agriculture Team
Topic: Farming for the Future

2015 Event Demographics

12 Teams Participated

44 Youth Participants

Average Participant Age

57% **43%**

Youth participants were asked to complete a post event survey to determine the exposure to agriculture they experienced during the program and there interest in pursuing an agricultural career at the programs completion. The final survey response rate was 100% (N=44).

Forty youth (**92%**) indicated that they had met with an agriculture community leader.

Thirty nine youth (**89%**) plan to pursue a career in agricultural science.

Thirty five youth (**79%**) wanted to study agriculture in college.

2016 Expansion Plans

The Minnesota 4-H Science of Agriculture Challenge has the potential to fill the hole that currently exists in the agricultural career pipeline while teaching youth that their participation in 4-H can lead them to college and/or trade school and into a viable career in agricultural sciences. During 2016, Minnesota 4-H would like to increase the number of teams from 12 to 40. Youth will also participate in regional exhibitions prior to attending the state contest on the University of Minnesota St Paul Campus in June 2016.

Washington County Team
Topic: Overwintering Bees in Minnesota

Crow Wing County Team
Topic: Buffer Zones: Protecting our Waterways with Native Plants

Le Sueur County Team
Topic: A comparison of efficiency and exhaust analysis of B10 Diesel, B100 Homemade Biodiesel, Kerosene and Ethanol

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